



## *The Old Ironsides Report*

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# 16<sup>th</sup> Engineers Celebrate Back to School

**Story and photo by Spc Ryan Smith**

**372nd MPAD**

BAGHDAD, Iraq - - U.S. Army engineers are builders. Some build bridges, some build living quarters for troops, but one particular group of engineers is working to build a better future for Iraq's children.

Soldiers from C Company, 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, have been working to renovate and restore schools in their area of operations to get children back into classrooms.

The Az Elarab School in north Baghdad, one of the schools the engineers have helped to restore, held a back-to-school party to celebrate the reopening of the school Aug. 28. The guests of honor were the soldiers from C Company.

The engineers first found the school in bad shape, said 1st Lt. Edwin Clarke, C Company executive officer. It had been used by Iraqi troops during the war as a defensive fighting position, and the school was damaged by combat.

C Company soldiers hired and worked with a local contractor, Saaddoun Hashim al Saraji. He and the engineers repaired the damage throughout the school.

The contractor replaced the plumbing fixtures—the toilets and sinks, some of which had been destroyed or taken by looters.

Al Saraji installed fans and blackboards in the classrooms, as well.

Workers also built a wall around the school to keep children away from the traffic on the busy street that runs right by the school, Clarke said. Soldiers from 1st Platoon, C Company, painted the wall.

Al Saraji said he was happy to work to fix the school for the children in his neighborhood.

"My neighbors came to me to ask for help because they like me and trust me," he said. Al Saraji also said that he was happy to be able to work in cooperation with the U.S. Army and coalition forces.

To celebrate returning to school, the soldiers leaders, met together at Az Elarab for a party. Al



**Kids from the Az Elarab School meet with 16th Engineer Battalion soldiers in their classroom in Baghdad Aug. 28. The 16th Engineer Battalion is part of the 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team.**

Saraji and his family provided local dishes for the guests to eat and soft drinks for the party.

Approximately 250 excited kids from the newly restored school greeted the soldiers, who brought school supplies to give to the school for the new school year.

The school supplies, which included pencils, paper, crayons and other supplies, were donated by the Turlock Calif., Rotary Club, Clarke said.

"The real future of Iraq is its kids," said Lt. Col. John Kem, commander, 16th Engineer Battalion.

"This is a great day. These kids are excited to be starting school next week," he said. "In Iraq, just like other places, kids are excited about going back to school."

There are hundreds of schools in Baghdad, he said. "I hope that this scene will be repeated everywhere."

## NEWS

### **New Film of Osama Bin Laden Is Shown**

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) - The Arabic satellite channel Al-Jazeera aired a video of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahri on Wednesday. In an accompanying audiotape, a voice said to be that of bin Laden praises the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States two years ago for causing "great damage to the enemy" and mentions five of the hijackers by name. Another voice on the tape, attributed to bin Laden top aide Ayman al-Zawahri, calls on Iraqi guerrillas to "bury" American troops in Iraq.

### **Bush Seeks to Improve Homeland Security**

WASHINGTON (AP) - On the eve of the second anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, President Bush is urging that law enforcement authorities get the same powers to investigate and prosecute suspected terrorists as they already have to combat drug-traffickers, embezzlers, mobsters and other criminals. Bush was outlining his request Wednesday at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va., where he was giving local emergency workers as well as officials from the federal law enforcement agency and the Homeland Security department an update on efforts to improve homeland security.

## **Chaplain's Thought for the Day:**

### *Free To Choose*

I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. --Philippians 4:11

During 1997 as the world focused on the deaths of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, another significant passing went almost unnoticed. Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl died on September 2 at the age of 93.

During World War II, Dr. Frankl was imprisoned at Auschwitz, where he was stripped of his identity as a medical doctor and forced to work as a common laborer. His father, mother, brother, and wife died in the concentration camps. All his notes, which represented his life's work, were destroyed. Yet Frankl emerged from Auschwitz believing that "everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms--to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

We may not be able to choose our circumstances, but we can choose our attitude toward them.

A good attitude--it's your choice.

## **In Memoriam**

At 8:45 a.m. on September 11, 2001 an American Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. The impact left a gaping hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more in higher floors. Eighteen minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767--United Airlines Flight 175--appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the World Trade Center, and sliced into the south tower at about the 60th floor. The collision caused a massive explosion that showered burning debris over surrounding buildings and the streets below. As millions watched in horror the events unfolding in New York, American Airlines Flight 77 circled over downtown Washington and slammed into the west side of the Pentagon building at 9:45 a.m. Jet fuel from the Boeing 757 caused a devastating fire that led to a structural collapse of a portion of the giant concrete building. Meanwhile, a fourth California-bound plane--United Flight 93--was hijacked about 40 minutes after leaving Newark International Airport in New Jersey. Because the plane had been delayed in taking off, passengers on board learned of events in New York and Washington via cell phone to the ground. Knowing that the aircraft was not returning to an airport as the hijackers claimed, a group of passengers and flight attendants planned an insurrection. The passengers fought the four hijackers and are suspected to have attacked the cockpit with a fire extinguisher. The plane then flipped over and sped toward the ground, crashing in a rural field in western Pennsylvania at 10:10 a.m. At 9 p.m., President George W. Bush delivered a televised address from the Oval Office, declaring "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."

## **A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety**

### **Risk Management-- What Is It?**

The process of identifying, assessing and controlling hazards arising from operational factors and making decisions that balance the risk costs and mission benefits.

**It is not an excuse to avoid a tough mission.**

**Protect the Force through Risk Management**